THE ART OF YIRRKALLA

Whereas the upper panels deal with the sea and seashore, the lower two deal with the land. In the central panel is the woman, *Njinpili-lingou*, a bark dish on her head, standing on the top of a sand-dune near Cape Shield. The rectangles on either side of her are nearby sand-dunes. In panel *a* the five cockatoos in flight were disturbed by *Njinpili-lingou*. There are also five emus in the same panel. Their tracks are shown on panel *c*.

The Man, Wanatjai

Plate 95B is the painting of an aboriginal, *Wanatjai*, with a long Malay smoking pipe in each hand.[92] On the upper edge of the painting are four steel axes, and on the left-hand side two steel knives. *Wanatjai* is wearing a belt. On his chest is a design of triangles[93] which he brought back from Macassar with him.

The Woman, Mahwulwi

In the early times a pregnant ancestral woman, *Mahwulwi*, accompanied by a little rat, *nik-nik* (the woman's dog), went into a mangrove swamp at Gumumungu, on the north side of Blue Mud Bay, to collect oysters. While filling her carrying-bag with the oysters, she was swept off her feet by a strong tide. She tried to swim to land, but was drowned because the tide was too strong and she too heavily pregnant. The little rat, *nik-nik*,[94] however, was able to swim to safety.

Mahwulwi's body is now a large tree in the mangrove swamps at Gumumungu. On the trunk of this tree there are marks indicating three maximum water levels: spring tides, usual tides and tides when, during the wet season, the fresh-water from the rivers floods the mangrove swamps.[95]

Plate 95D depicts *Mahwulwi* in the mangrove swamp at Gumumungu, near Blue Mud Bay, where she used to collect oysters. The cross-hatched panels *a*, *a*, indicate the fresh-water from the river running among the mangrove trees and meeting the tide coming up from the bay. As mentioned in the myth, when the tide ebbs it leaves dark lines on the trunks of the trees.

Muruma, the Fisherman

In early times *Muruma*, a noted fisherman, lived with his wife beside a stream called Bamui, near the totemic place of Jalboa, north-east of Yirrkalla.

One day *Muruma*, having speared many fish, put them on the fire to cook. He was resting under a tree when one of the *Bukalatji* (enemies of *Muruma*) paid him a visit, saying that he and his wife were hungry, having just paddled all the way from Dambalia (Bremer Island). Little suspecting treachery, *Muruma* gave his cooked fish to the *Bukalatji*, who, after having eaten them, rose to go.

92. Interpretation: F. M. Setzler.
93. This is the same as the *jiritja* chest symbol of Cape Arnhem (Fig. 63H). It is also present in the art of the Celebes, Fig. 63R.
94. See bark painting of the rat, *nik-nik*, and *Bourongawili's* dog, *dulainja*, Pl. 121A.
95. These marks are indicated on the carved wooden figure of *Mahwulwi*, Pl. 133C, D.